AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Previously amended) In a communication system including a switch coupled with Customer Premises Equipment (CPE) and an application server coupled with the switch, a method for sending a server-specified message to the CPE without setting up a call path between the application server and the CPE, the method comprising the steps of:

sending a request from the application server to the switch; and

sending, based upon the request, a predetermined server-specified message from the switch to the CPE without setting up a call path between the application server and the CPE, wherein the CPE is not rung and the predetermined server-specified message is not affected by features of the CPE.

2. (Previously amended) A method for sending a message in accordance with claim 1, wherein the step of sending a predetermined server-specified message from the switch to the CPE comprises the step of forwarding the request received from the application server to the CPE.

3. (Original) A method for sending a message in accordance with claim 1, the method further comprising the step of sending a return message from the CPE to the switch without setting up a call path between the application server and the CPE.

4. (Original) A method for sending a message in accordance with claim 3, the method further comprising the step of sending a status message based upon the return message from the switch to the application server without setting up a call path between the application server and the CPE.

5. (Original) A method for sending a message in accordance with claim 1, wherein the step of sending a predetermined server-specified message from the switch to the CPE comprises the step of opening an analog path to send the predetermined server-specified message to the CPE.

6. (Original) A switch comprising:

means for receiving a request from an application server;

means for determining the type of CPE message based upon the request; and

means, responsive to the type of message, for sending a predetermined message to a CPE coupled to the switch without setting up a call path between the application server and the CPE, the predetermined message not being affected by features assigned to the CPE.

7. (Original) A switch in accordance with claim 6, wherein the means for sending the predetermined server-specified message to the CPE comprises means for forwarding the request from the application server to the CPE without setting up a call path between the application server and the CPE.

8. (Original) A switch in accordance with claim 6, the switch further comprising means for receiving a return message from the CPE to the switch without setting up a call path between the application server and the CPE.

9. (Original) A switch in accordance with claim 8, the switch further comprising means for sending a status message based upon the return message from the switch to the application server.

10. (Original) A switch in accordance with claim 6, wherein the means for sending a predetermined message to the CPE comprises means for sending a message to the CPE using suppressed ringing capabilities.

11. (Original) A switch comprising:

an input port effective in receiving a request from an application server;

a processor effective in determining the type of message based upon the request; and

an output port effective in sending, responsive to the type of request, a predetermined message to a CPE coupled to the switch without setting up a call path between the application server, the switch, and the CPE and not being affected by features of the CPE.

12. (Original) A switch in accordance with claim 11, the switch further comprising a CPE port effective in receiving a return message from the CPE without setting up a call path between the application server and the CPE.

13. (Original) A switch in accordance with claim 12, the switch further comprising an acknowledgment port effective in sending a status message from the switch to the application server, the status message based upon the return message.

14. (Original) A switch in accordance with claim 11, wherein the output port is effective in sending a message utilizing suppressed ringing capabilities to the CPE.

15. (Original) A switch comprising:

an input port effective in receiving a server-specified message from an application server; and

an output port effective in sending the server-specified message, wherein the server-specified message is sent to a CPE coupled to the switch without setting up a call path between the application server, the switch, and the CPE and not being affected by features of the CPE.

16. (Original) A communication system for sending predetermined messages to Customer Premises Equipment (CPE) without setting up an end-to-end call path, the communication system comprising:

an application server;

Customer Premises Equipment (CPE); and

a switch coupled to the application server and the CPE, the switch effective in receiving a request from the application server and effective in sending, based upon the request, a predetermined message to the CPE without setting up an end-to-end call path between the CPE and the application server, wherein the predetermined message is not affected by features of the CPE.

17. (Original) A communication system in accordance with claim 16, wherein the switch is effective in forwarding the request from the application server to the CPE.

18. (Original) A communication system in accordance with claim 16, the switch further being effective in receiving a return message from the CPE without setting up a call path between the application server and the CPE.

19. (Original) A communication system in accordance with claim 18, the switch further being effective in sending a status message based upon the return message to the application server.

20. (Original) A communication system in accordance with claim 16, wherein the CPE comprises a modem.

21. (Original) A communication system in accordance with claim 16, wherein the CPE comprises a computer.

22. (Original) A communication system in accordance with claim 16, wherein the CPE comprises a data communications terminal.

23. (Original) A communication system in accordance with claim 16, wherein the application server comprises a computer.

24. (Original) A communication system in accordance with claim 16, wherein the application server comprises a data communications device.